

History of the Accutron Watches

There have been songs written about, curses thrown at it, and bittersweet memories where we are lost in it. Of course we are talking about time. It is one of the most sought after commodities in the world. It makes sense that people would want watches and timepieces that are able to keep accurate time. In the early 1960's, a brilliant man by the name of Max Hetzel revolutionized the technology used to keep accurate time and the Accutron watch dynasty was born.

Using a completely different method for producing watches than ever before the Bulova Watch Company, with Mr. Hetzel, came up with the idea to make watches using tuning fork technology. No one had ever done this before. The tuning fork method had been used with good success in clocks before, but never was mass produced. Certainly no one had ever attempted to miniaturize the components before. Max Hetzel began his research and development of this new concept in 1953. The very first prototypes of the Accutron watches were manufactured in 1955. In the Bulova Headquarters in New York, Mr. Hetzel, along with William Bennett, performed further study and development of this amazing watch making technique. It wasn't until 1960 that the first mass produced tuning fork Accutron watches were released to the public.

In order to understand how important and advanced the introduction to the tuning fork watches was, it is important to be aware of the typical technology used at the time. Every other watch company was still relying on the traditional balance wheel and hairspring method of watch construction. This type of method had been used for over 300 years in watch making. Obviously this is a fairly accurate method for keeping time, but the Accutron watches were able to be so accurate that the makers promised that the watch would never change more than a minute in either direction over the course of a month. The more conventional watches of the time also had a ticking sound associated with their balance wheel and hairspring. In contrast the Accutron watches were characterized with a humming sound, due the sound the tiny tuning fork inside produces. Many people will remember the jerky motion made by the second hand on conventional watches. In yet another drastic difference, the watches engineered by Mr. Hetzel had a fluid, smooth motion in the second hand.

The differences between the two types of watches didn't stop there. The appearance of the watches was markedly different as well. We have already discussed how the second hands differed, but there are several other external differences as well. The early models of the Accutron watch weren't produced with a visible crown. That means that a recessed handle on the back of the watch case controls the setting mechanism. Later models had an even more striking difference. They didn't have a dial at all. It was pretty difficult to not notice that the Accutron watches didn't have a conventional movement.

The new features didn't stop at the external appearance of the Accutron watches either. The insides were fairly different as well. Of course, this was the first time a tuning fork in miniature form, had ever been used in the construction of a watch. That's why it produced a humming sound as opposed to the ticking of conventional watches. These watches were also considered the first electronic watches because they were the first to use a transistorized circuit. In the early 1960's, this was a huge breakthrough in technology. The firsts of the Accutron just keep coming. It was also the first watch to be produced with plastic parts. Plastics were used to protect the circuitry of the Accutron. For the first time ever, there was a watch made that was easy to service and more reliable due to the fact that it has fewer parts than conventional watches. It's clear to see why the production of these watches was a revolutionary development in timepiece history.

While it is certainly true that the general public loved the new technology and reliability given by the Accutron watches, the U.S. government found some amazing uses for it as well. It was first used in the Explorer VII missile. Due to its amazing accurate time keeping abilities, it was used to turn off the radio equipment on the satellite according to specific requirements. The astronauts of the Apollo wore Accutron watches due to their precision. In the 1960's it was the premium timepiece when accuracy was essential.

Max Hetzel, the Bulova Watch Company, and the whole team involved in the creation of the tuning fork Accutron watches have a lot to be proud of.

About the Author

Zai Zhu is a watch collector and a watch dealer. Visit <http://www.discountwatchstore.com> to learn more about wristwatches. You can also shop over 1200 styles fine watches including many Bulova watches, [Accutron watches](#), Wittnauer watches, Citizen watches, Seiko watches, Invicta watches, Luminox watches as well as other brand name watches such as Adeo Kaye, Corvette, Croton, Lucien Piccard, Orient, Perigaum, TW Steel, Vanceur, and Wenger.

Source: <http://www.articletrader.com>